

**Members**

Rep. Ralph Ayres, Chairperson  
Rep. Don Lehe  
Rep. Mary Kay Budak  
Rep. John Aguilera  
Rep. Charlie Brown  
Rep. Duane Cheney  
Sen. Sue Landske, Vice-Chairperson  
Sen. Marvin Riegsecker  
Sen. Joseph Zakas  
Sen. Rose Antich-Carr  
Sen. Frank Mrvan  
Sen. Earline Rogers  
Mayor Daniel M. Klein  
James Pettit



# **NORTHWEST INDIANA TRANSPORTATION STUDY COMMISSION**

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**Authority:** P.L. 28-2004

## **MEETING MINUTES<sup>1</sup>**

**Meeting Date:** October 25, 2005  
**Meeting Time:** 1:00 P.M.  
**Meeting Place:** Northwest Indiana Regional  
Planning Commission, Auditorium  
6100 Southport Road  
**Meeting City:** Portage, Indiana  
**Meeting Number:** 4

**Members Present:** Rep. Ralph Ayres, Chairperson; Rep. Don Lehe; Rep. Duane Cheney; Sen. Sue Landske, Vice-Chairperson; Sen. Earline Rogers; Mayor Daniel M. Klein.

**Members Absent:** Rep. Mary Kay Budak; Rep. John Aguilera; Rep. Charlie Brown; Sen. Marvin Riegsecker; Sen. Joseph Zakas; Sen. Rose Antich-Carr; Sen. Frank Mrvan; James Pettit.

## **COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING**

Rep. Ayres called the fourth meeting of the Commission to order at 1:06 p.m.

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<sup>1</sup> Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

## LAPORTE COUNTY COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Rep. Ayres introduced **Mayor Chuck Oberlie**, Michigan City, **Mayor Leigh Morris**, LaPorte, and **Chancellor James Dworkin**, Purdue University North Central (PNC) (located in Westville). He then asked all three gentlemen jointly to talk about the cooperative efforts they have made to further development in LaPorte County.

Mayor Oberlie began by saying that in the last two years the county and cities and towns of LaPorte County have discovered opportunities to share resources. He gave the examples of cooperation on municipal storm sewer projects and the development of a county-wide master plan. These efforts have involved the creation of shared goals and objectives using the same nomenclature.

Mayor Morris explained the premise of their cooperative efforts. The typical attitude toward economic and public works development projects in LaPorte County, like other counties, has been competitive: each city, town, and the county desiring projects and resources for itself. But the shared attitude now has become the idea that successful development anywhere in LaPorte County benefits everyone in the County. Mayor Morris gave an example of a company who initially had initially thought about locating in Michigan City. When it became apparent that the fit was not quite right, everyone worked together on keeping that business in LaPorte County, and the business eventually located near LaPorte.

Mayor Morris said that he felt that they have been fortunate to have Chancellor Dworkin's participation. He said that Chancellor Dworkin has worked as a convener of presentations and forums on tools for economic development. Mayor Morris added that the county-wide master plan came out of one of these educational events.

Chancellor Dworkin began by saying that Purdue University North Central has 3500 students and his surveys indicate that 80% of those students will stay in LaPorte County. Therefore, he knows that economic development concerns have a significant impact on those students' lives.

Chancellor Dworkin said that as a result of all these efforts everyone in LaPorte County now understands the advantages that cooperation can bring. And this shared understanding makes a big difference because site developers now know that everyone is working from the same script. Chancellor Dworkin added that the bottom line for him is that now when he hands a diploma to a student, he can be confident that that student has a field of opportunities before him or her. All that occurs, Chancellor Dworkin said, because everyone is committed to working together.

Mayor Oberlie expressed his belief that what they have accomplished within LaPorte County to some extent lays the ground for cooperation beyond LaPorte County. He talked about his feeling of responsibility to the region as well as to his home county. Chancellor Dworkin indicated that their first moves in this direction would be a series of educational seminars at PNC on the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA). In response to a question from Rep. Ayres, Chancellor Dworkin thought those seminars would begin before the end of the year.

**Sen. Earline Rogers** said that as she was listening to the presentation, she was thinking in terms of how to apply this style of cooperation in Lake County. She spoke about problems with mistrust, competitive attitudes, and racial division. She asked whether the panel had experienced challenges like this in LaPorte County.

Mayor Oberlie said that some of the same feelings have existed in LaPorte County. He said that Michigan City is similar in development to urban Lake County and that most of the minority population of LaPorte County resides in Michigan City. In addition, he alluded to rivalries in LaPorte County so old that they had become traditions even though nobody could remember the reasons for them. But, Mayor Oberlie said, it takes leadership to break out of this kind of thinking. In addition, he thought it was important to have a neutral ground like the PNC campus and a facilitator like Chancellor Dworkin, who has a strong background in labor mediation.

Mayor Oberlie said that people in LaPorte County had come to the conclusion that they could not continue to operate the way they had in the past. There was only one way to go forward and that was to share resources. He gave two additional examples. In LaPorte County, they have established an informal quarterly meeting of officials, including treasurers and presidents of town councils. And, now in process of organization, LaPorte County political subdivisions are attempting to reduce costs by pooling their purchasing power with a cooperative purchasing arrangement.

Chancellor Dworkin emphasized the need to start with small steps. Once the small steps are successful, people are willing to try for more. Mayor Morris added that he felt they had built a framework that allows for cooperation.

**Rep. Don Lehe** asked whether there are any LaPorte County transportation issues that did not make it into the State's *Major Moves* transportation plan.

Both Mayor Oberlie and Mayor Morris agreed that Highway 421 is an important artery in LaPorte County and its expansion would have significant benefits, but this project is not on the list. Chancellor Dworkin said that PNC supports the 421 project because PNC is a commuting campus. The PNC campus is located on Highway 421 in Westville. Chancellor Dworkin added that having a bus loop would also be advantageous.

Mayor Oberlie said LaPorte County needs a better link into regional transportation. He said that LaPorte County struggles with running federal programs and that they need some sort of tool, but they are not yet able to distill that need into a legislative proposal.

Rep. Ayres thanked all three gentlemen for appearing before the Commission.

#### **INDIANA STATE POLICE: TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT**

Rep. Ayres turned to the next topic of the day by saying that in the previous meeting with Indiana Department of Transportation Commissioner Thomas Sharp some of the Commission members had expressed interest in safety issues on Interstate 65. As a result,

Rep. Ayres invited **Major Thomas Melville**, Field Enforcement Division, Indiana State Police, to speak on traffic enforcement along Interstate 65 from Indianapolis to Gary and on Highway 31 from Indianapolis to Highway 20.

Major Melville reviewed for the Commission the distribution of personnel assigned to patrol duty in each of the seven State Police districts that these segments of highway traverse. See Attachment. In addition, his presentation included information on special enforcement projects funded by traffic safety grants, the new Administrative Enforcement Program, and the increasing use of marked patrol cars and motorcycles in traffic enforcement. The Administrative Enforcement Program assigns administrative personnel to patrol duty several days per month. Major Melville also described for the Commission the significant cooperation between the State Police and county sheriff departments and other first responders from communities along the specified highways.

### **REGIONAL BUS AUTHORITY**

Rep. Ayres asked **Dan Gardner**, Deputy Director of the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), and **Belinda Petroskey**, also of NIRPC, to present any information on legislative changes requested by the Lake Porter Regional Bus Authority (RBA).

Mr. Gardner told the Commission that there are two changes to the regional transportation authority statute that the RBA would like to have. First, with respect to the labor union appointee to the RBA board, the RBA would like to strike the language that refers to the member of the labor union as "representing employees of the authority . . . ." IC 36-9-3-5(c)(11). The request is to strike the quoted language. Secondly, the RBA wants to have the membership of the citizens advisory council revised to achieve a proportional representation of the citizens in Porter County who are served by the RBA. See IC 36-9-3-12.5.

Rep. Ayres indicated that he will introduce a bill of local government changes in the upcoming session and asked Mr. Gardner for a memorandum detailing the requested changes, which Mr. Gardner agreed to provide at some future date.

### **ADOPTION OF FINAL REPORT**

The final item on the agenda for the meeting was deliberation on the adoption of a final report. However, with only six of fourteen members in attendance, the Commission failed to establish a quorum, which is necessary for the Commission to take any action, including adoption of a final report. Because the Commission's authorizing statute requires the Commission to submit a final report by November 1, 2005, and dissolves the Commission on November 2, 2005, Rep. Ayres scheduled a fifth and final meeting of the Commission for 1:00 p.m. CST (2:00 p.m. EST) on Monday October 31, 2005, at the NIRPC offices in Portage for the sole purpose of taking action on a final report.

**CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING**

Rep. Ayres declared the meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.